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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 001844

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2016

TAGS: [PINS](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MCNS DISCUSSES NEW PLAN FOR BAGHDAD SECURITY

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD FOR REASONS 1.4 (A), (B), (D)  
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[11.](#) (S//REL GBR AUS) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki convened a meeting of the Ministerial Committee for National Security (MCNS) on May 29 to discuss the Baghdad Security Plan. National Security Advisor (NSA) Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubaie provided a briefing on the political and outreach aspects of the plan, while Fourth U.S. Infantry Division (4ID) Commanding General J.D. Thurman explained the military components. For several of the Iraqis present, this was their first exposure to the MCNS process, and they expressed uncertainty about approving the plan if they could not be assured of its success. It was agreed that a "Red Team" would examine the plan one more time to assure all that it is workable and stands a good chance of success. The PM also directed the Iraqi Army to formulate a plan to deal with reportedly rising levels of violence in Diyala province. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (S//REL GBR AUS) PM Maliki convened the MCNS at his office the morning of May 29. Present for the Iraqis were DPM for Security and Acting MinDef Salam al-Zawba'i, DPM Barham Salih, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hoshyar Zebari, NSA Rubaie, Iraqi Army Chief of Staff Babikir Shawkt, and the PM's Assistant Dr. al-Tamimi. Also present were Ambassador, British Ambassador Patey, MNF-I Commanding General Casey, and 4ID Commanding General Thurman.

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BAGHDAD SECURITY PLAN  
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[13.](#) (S//REL GBR AUS) The purpose of the meeting was to continue discussions from May 25 on the Baghdad Security Plan. Rubaie explained that in addition to its military aspects, it is important that the Plan be put into political context and that Iraqis be informed of it through a media outreach campaign. Such a campaign would include a public announcement of the government's plan for security that puts it in the context of national unity. Religious leaders would be called upon to speak in its favor, and the leaders of militias and armed groups would be engaged in advance. The people, Rubaie argued, must be told what the Ministries of Interior (MOI) and Defense (MOD) are doing to protect them, primarily from Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ).

[14.](#) (S//REL GBR AUS) Non-military aspects of the plan include:

- Improved border security
- Strict regulation of personal security details
- Increased police presence
- Funding to replace worn out or destroyed police equipment and vehicles

-- Additional professionalization of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), including new, unique uniforms to make it more difficult for unauthorized armed groups to masquerade as police

15. (S//REL GBR AUS) Rubaie confirmed that clear statements would be made to the public to:

-- Call for national unity  
-- Explain that licenses will be required for weapons and that the number of guns permitted to be stored inside mosques and husayniyas will be strictly controlled  
-- State that an amnesty for members of the "honorable resistance" is being considered; the government will work to develop a more effective judicial system; organized crime will be targeted; new jobs will be created, support will be sought from neighboring countries; and a system will be put in place to more effectively register and track vehicle ownership.

16. (S//GBR AUS) MG Thurman then briefed the military aspects of the security plan, which call for a focus on four areas of Baghdad where sectarian violence, murders, and assassinations continue to be a problem. These problems are caused by AQIZ (which is attempting to foment sectarian strife), militias, organized criminal gangs, and illegal Sharia courts, Thurman said. Different combinations of forces will be sent to these areas; permanent checkpoints will be augmented by temporary and constantly moving traffic control points; and targeted operations against terrorist cells operating on Baghdad's fringes will continue 24 hours a day to interdict their ability to carry out attacks in the city center. Areas of Baghdad with minimal problems will be turned over to competent Iraqi police forces to further build confidence in the government's ability to maintain peace without the Iraqi

BAGHDAD 00001844 002 OF 003

Army or CF. In addition, funds will be spent to beautify parts of Baghdad by cleaning up unauthorized checkpoints and makeshift street barricades. It is anticipated that ISF will take the lead and that Coalition Forces (CF) will play a supporting role. Iraq will also look to the Coalition and to other neighbors and international partners for funding to help reintegrate members of armed groups into society.

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QUESTIONS RAISED  
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17. (S//REL GBR AUS) Following the presentations by Rubaie and MG Thurman, DPM Zawba'i protested that although he is the DPM in charge of security and the Acting MinDef, this was the first time he was hearing about all of this. To achieve security, Zawba'i said, it is necessary for the CF to gain the Iraqi people's trust, which cannot be done while thousands of detainees remain in custody. Zawba'i then criticized the state of detention facilities managed by the MOI and MOD and insisted that the Coalition assist in obtaining the release of detainees, or at least their transfer to facilities managed by the Ministry of Justice. He recommended that checkpoints in Baghdad be manned jointly by MOD and MOI forces because the people have more trust in the Iraqi Army than they do in the police. Zawba'i objected to Rubaie's earlier reference to an "honorable resistance" and said that he is going to meet with clerics and militia leaders to emphasize that, with the formation of a National Unity government, the age of the gun is over and the age of reconstruction has begun.

18. (S//REL GBR AUS) Rubaie sought to address Zawba'i's concerns, pointing out that steps are being taken to address the detainee problem, that the security plan had been put together with MNF-I prior to the seating of the new government, and that the previous government had also formulated a five-point plan to deal with militias. Rubaie then repeated the political and public outreach steps that

will be taken in conjunction with the security plan.

¶9. (S//REL GBR AUS) Ambassador pointed out that achieving security in Baghdad is critical, as all of Iraq and the outside world look to what is happening in Baghdad as an indicator of how things are going in the country as a whole. Because the enactment of this plan will be the first major security decision taken by the new government, Ambassador added, it is important that all involved have confidence that the plan is well conceived and that we have the resources to make it a success. The government must not over-promise or under-deliver, Ambassador warned, nor must it set expectations that cannot be met. GEN Casey assured Ambassador and the others that sufficient forces exist to make the plan a success, noting five main points to emphasize the critical interplay between policy, action, and communications. In GEN Casey's view:

-- The government must make an announcement about the security plan that places it in the context of national unity;

-- A public affairs outreach program must be designed that will get the Iraqi people involved (e.g., by encouraging them to use tip lines more to address the problems in their neighborhoods);

-- There must be a policy and action on weapons possession and illegal checkpoints;

-- Anti-terrorism measures (such as curfews, vehicle bans, etc.) must be used to help ISF get the population involved;

-- There must be a broad statement on militia policy.

¶10. (S//REL GBR AUS) Both Maliki and DPM Salih continued to have questions concerning the plan, such as how it differs from what is already being done and whether the size of the force and the nature of the actions to be taken are sufficient to achieve the goals set. Army Chief of Staff Babikir opined that the plan as presented is comprehensive and supported by the Army. Ambassador suggested that the plan be subjected to a review by a "Red Team" to identify and fill any gaps that may exist. The Prime Minister directed Rubaie to coordinate a final review of the plan.

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DIYALA  
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¶11. (S//REL GBR AUS) Maliki reported he had received a letter  
BAGHDAD 00001844 003 OF 003

from the Governor of Diyala Province stating that reported levels of violence are increasing beyond the ability of local authorities to control. The Governor is requesting central government assistance to address these problems. Maliki directed Babikir to formulate a plan on how the Army can be used to help assist local forces quell the violence.

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COMMENT  
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¶12. (S//REL GBR AUS) COMMENT: This was the first MCNS meeting for nearly all of the Iraqi participants, and it was clear that they have yet to define their own roles on the committee. Likewise, it was the first time that they have dealt with the highest levels of Coalition military and diplomatic leadership concerning the serious security matters facing the country.  
KHALILZAD